

ALL ABOUT SNACKS

Nutritious snacks, planned as part of your daily food intake, can be important in meeting your nutrient needs. Snacks can supply your body with the calories, protein, vitamins, and minerals it requires. However, unhealthy snacks may add unwanted calories, fat, and salt to your diet. The guidelines below will help you to choose healthy and nutritious snacks.

Planning for snacks:

1. Think ahead.
 - Plan to buy healthy snacks when you go to the grocery store so you will have healthy snacks on hand
 - Schedule snacks so they don't interfere with meals but provide you with energy for daily activities and exercise
 - Consider when and where you will be snacking
2. Limit portion sizes.
 - Try not to eat too large of a snack so that it doesn't replace your meal
 - One cup of yogurt, a piece of fruit, a half of sandwich, or a handful of nuts should be just the right amount to give you a boost of energy
3. Think variety.
 - Choose snacks from a variety of food groups to pack in the nutrients. Include whole grain breads and cereals, fruits, vegetables, meats, and dairy products.

Snack Ideas:

- Bring naturally sweet fresh fruit to work or school rather than buying a candy bar from the vending machine. Fruits, such as grapes, bananas, pears, berries, and dried fruits like apricots, raisins, or prunes are great snacks.
- Pack raw vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, sweet peas, celery, cucumber, and red, green, or yellow peppers. Low fat salad dressings or salsa make great dips.
- Choose combinations of snacks like whole grain crackers and low fat cheese, yogurt with fruit, cereal and low fat milk, or peanut butter and apple slices.
- When traveling, pack snacks that will stay fresh in your car. Good choices may be crackers, rice cakes, and pretzels. If you can keep a cooler with ice packs in your vehicle, bring along foods like string cheese, fresh cut vegetables, fresh fruit, low fat milk, and yogurt.
- If you're buying your snacks on the road at a fast food restaurant or convenience store, try pretzels, a small soft-serve cone, or a low fat milkshake.

